

World Golf Hall Of Fame Induction Ceremony

Tuesday, September 26 2017

Davis Love III

Induction Speech

TOM KITE: It's always an honor to get in front of this group. This is pretty incredible. In 2004 when I was inducted into this wonderful Hall, I looked around, and I could only think of one person that I would love to have present me, and that was my good friend and lifelong competitor Ben Crenshaw. Ben did a fantastic job, way better than I'm going to do for Davis, I can assure you. But after that ceremony, Ben came up and he said, Tom, he said, I've got to tell you, that's one of the biggest honors that I've ever had in my life, being able to present you for the Hall of Fame. And of course I'm thinking, you know, Ben is being Ben, his usual nice guy, he's thrown a bunch of BS out there, and I'm sitting there going, wait a minute, Ben, come on, this is not that big a deal. And I really never believed him until about three or four months ago, I got a phone call from Davis. He asked me if I was going to come up to the Presidents Cup because I had designed Liberty National with Bob Cupp, and I said of course I'm going to be up there, I wouldn't miss that tournament. Well, he said, you're probably going to be at the Hall of Fame then, aren't you. And I said, yeah, I'm definitely going to do it. And then he said, well, Tom, you know, if you don't mind, could you -- would you -- would you mind presenting me, and I said, darned right, and I knew exactly what Ben meant. It really is a tremendous honor for me to be up here to present my good friend and truly one of the nicest men that has ever graced our game, Davis Love III.

DAVIS LOVE III: Thank you, Tom. How incredibly generous of you. Thank you for being there when I was starting out on Tour and today and the 31 years in between. One of Tom's early messages to me was to smile more. He'd say, I know you're enjoying it, but people have to see it. I knew what he was talking about, make a birdie on the last hole, pull the ball out of the hole, get interviewed on TV looking like I was coming out of a root canal. I was smiling but it was all on the inside. Well, now I'm in the World Golf Hall of Fame, and I'm here to tell you, ladies and gentlemen, I'm smiling.

It's some name, the World Golf Hall of Fame. Golf is becoming more global all the time. Look at this year's class: Lorena Ochoa of Mexico, Ian Woosnam of Wales, the late Henry Longhurst of England, and Meg Mallon, native New Englander and daughter, I'm



guessing, of Ireland. What a privilege for me to go in with all of you, and what about the group we are joining. I was driving north Florida recently and saw a billboard for the Hall of Fame featuring huge photos of Jack Nicklaus and Arnold Palmer, Big Jack and Arnie, they won 10 Masters between them. Now that's a special club for to be sure, a club within the club for all the Augusta winners. Ian knows all about that. But this club that I've joined now along with Ian and Men, along with Mr. Longhurst, in my mind is golf's ultimate club. But I'm not fooling myself. I don't see anybody going to the World Golf Village just to see my new locker there. But what golfer wouldn't want to see Arnold's locker or Jack's. Arnold has enough stuff in his locker for a yard sale. My own locker, though, is still a construction site.

I'm thinking of putting in some things that represent my off-the-course interests. This is a Neil Cost turkey call. Neil Cost was the Tiger Woods of hand-carved turkey call makers. It's a piece of the history and the traditions of the South. I was told not to do that very loud. What do you think, folks? Do I put a turkey call in my locker? My wife of 31 years, ladies and gentlemen, Robin Love. She would prefer that I move all my turkey call collection to St. Augustine, keep Dru and I from making racket in our house. I bought an engagement ring for her with my first tournament paycheck. It was the best money I ever spent.

I don't know what Mr. Longhurst will have in his locker. My dad was a teaching pro who played in 16 major championships between 1955 and 1974, and Henry Longhurst probably covered most of them. It's amazing how interconnected everything is in golf. In my youth, I played a bunch of times with Paul Runyan, who won the first of his PGA Championships in 1934, and I played with Justin Thomas, who won the first of his PGA Championships in 2017. Paul Runyan was playing when the first generation of Scottish-American golfers, including Donald Ross, were still on the scene.

Before he is done, I imagine Justin Thomas will go toe to toe in major championships with golfers who aren't even born yet, golfers from China and India and other parts of the world. Golf shrinks time. It's always done that. These days it shrinks the world. Getting back to Henry, while I was preparing for this night, I read Henry Longhurst's Sports Illustrated story about Arnold's win

at the Royal Birkdale in 1961. I learned things in it I had never known, and the second round Arnold was in a bunker on the 16th hole. On his down swing, a gust of wind moved his ball and he hit a moving ball. He told a rules official what happened, and immediately added a shot to his score. Nobody but Arnold could have possibly seen that ball move. But Arnold understood that strict adherence to the rules is the backbone of our game. He and thousands of others passed that understanding on to my generation, and I have tried to pass that on to the next. Playing by the rules, showing restraint, honoring the game's etiquette, that's how we golfers at every level show respect for the game and for the people we're competing against. It's really just an extension of the golden rule. I got that from my father, from Paul Runyan, from Tom Kite, from Vinny Giles, and of course from my mom.

I could stand here until sunrise and say thank you to the many, many people who have helped me get here today. I try to show my gratitude every day. I'm sure I'm not successful, but I try.

Longhurst wrote something about Arnold at the '61 Open that I have read again and again, and I quote, "He has no fancy airs or graces. He wears no fancy clothes. He makes no fancy speeches. He simply says and does exactly the right thing at the right time. And that is enough." When I read that, I felt like Henry captured Arnold exactly as we all know him, but I also felt like he was writing about my dad.

I was lucky enough to play for Arnold and for Jack, too, when they were captains of Presidents Cup teams. I was lucky enough to have Watson, Kite, Watkins, Strange and Sutton as my Ryder Cup captains. I was a captain twice of Ryder Cup teams. This week I'll be an assistant captain of a Presidents Cup for a third time. When I look back over the 31 years of my professional career, my involvement in these team matches, matches that have brought together the world of golf, have meant as much to me as anything I have done in the game. And I'm looking forward to supporting my teammates this week at Liberty National. You can see the Statue of Liberty from the course. I don't know what could be more inspiring than that.

We live in a country where life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness are at our core, but we don't forget that just recently golfers in Japan got pulled off of a golf course because of a North Korea missile test. One of our jobs as golfers, no matter where in the world we come from, is to uphold the traditions of those who came before us. To do that, all we really have to do is treat one another respectfully and strictly adhere to the rule book. If we do that, we'll leave the game in better shape than we found it.

As citizens of the world, our job is exactly the same. Golf gives us a good example, a great example if we follow it. This game has given me far more than I could ever give it, consider this night for one thing. In ways the game evolves constantly. It's evolving.

This is the wooden driver I used when I played in my first U.S. Open in 1988. This is the metal driver, a little bit bigger, that my son Dru used when he played in the U.S. Open this year. If his caddie had been a little more on the ball, he probably would have made the cut.

But in its most important ways, golf does not change. The strange combination of demands golf makes on your body and mind, golf's reliance on the honor system, golf's simple demand to get the ball in a distant hole in the fewest strokes possible.

My next prop. This is Eloise Watley, on loan from her mother Lexie Love. This piece of crystal was given to my father, a gift from Augusta National Golf Club. The club has a tradition of giving crystal to the person who shoots the lowest round of the day. My father shot 69 in the first round of the '64 Masters. Nobody shot lower. He didn't win on Sunday. Arnold did. And I was born the day after. And this piece of crystal, unchanged from what my dad won in 1964, was given to me for shooting the low round of the day at the 1995 Masters. I finished a shot behind the winner, Ben Crenshaw, another of my Ryder Cup captains.

Ben had buried his teacher Harvey Penick five days earlier. Harvey taught Ben, Harvey taught Tom Kite, Harvey taught my father. Now I'm in the same club as Harvey and Ben and Tom, the World Golf Hall of Fame. Eloise, your great grandfather played in U.S. Opens. Your grandfather did, too, your mom's brother, your Uncle Dru has played in one. Maybe there will be more to come for me and for me as his caddie. You can't know. Golf makes no guarantees. Maybe someday you'll play in a U.S. Open. That's up to you. But whether you do or don't, I hope the game I know and love will be there for you as it was and as it is for me. It should be, but that's up to us. I hope it is, Eloise, because even though golf can make you half crazy at times, it can also bring you friends and challenges and opportunities like nothing else I know. And it can tell you all about yourself, the bad and the good and in between. Golf has improved my life in every way, and this I can guarantee, it will do the same for you. And that's why this celebration tonight, this induction into the World Golf Hall of Fame, is the greatest honor of my life. Thank you.